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THE UNITED STATES AND THE LIBERATION OF THE SPANISH-AMERICAN COLONIES.

BY M. ROMERO, MEXICAN MINISTER TO THE UNITED STATES.

THE independence of the United States, proclaimed in 1776, recognized by England in the treaty signed at Paris on September 3d, 1783, and based really on economic reasons, and, still more, the recognition of that independence by Spain, principally on account of her hostility to England, and at the suggestion of her ally, France, at that time waging war upon England, could not fail to produce a very great impression in the Spanish colonies of America. These events showed the native Americans that the European colonies of this continent had the right, recognized by Spain, to sever their connection with the mother country, not only for political but for economic reasons. It was for that consideration that the Count de Aranda, a very able Spanish statesman, advised Charles III., immediately upon the recognition of the United States by Spain, in a treaty signed in Paris in 1783, to establish among the Spanish possessions in America three great empires—Mexico, Peru, and a third on the Spanish Main, or in New Granada, Venezuela, etc., under the rule of three members of the Spanish royal family. He proposed that the King should assume the title of Emperor, that the new sovereigns should intermarry into the Spanish royal family, and that each of them should pay an annual tribute into the Spanish treasury. Although this scheme might have proved difficult of realization, and might have undergone radical changes, the final result would certainly have been less disastrous to Spain than the complete emancipation of her American colonies.

The French revolution, which was to a certain extent the result of American independence, must have had a great influence

also on the minds of the native Americans, since it was a very serious blow to the theory of divine right by which it was then supposed in the Western World that nations were governed, as well as a recognition of the natural rights of the people; and this notwithstanding that the discreditable and sanguinary deeds of that revolution, and especially its acts of hostility to the Catholic religion, were represented by the Spanish authorities to the American colonists as being the acts of frenzied men, inspired by the worst passions, and as illustrating the excesses to which the people were liable when unrestrained by their legitimate rulers. The fact that the Bourbons were not restored to power, but that the French revolution took a conservative turn and was finally succeeded by the Empire of the First Napoleon, who ruled, not by divine right, but as the choice of the people for the benefit of the people, was the final blow to the principles on which the rule of the Spanish monarchy in America was based.

European Conspiracy to Accomplish Independence.—I have no information that would lead me to believe that the Mexicans who favored the independence of their country had organized, for the promotion of their cause, any secret society or political revolutionary centre, either in Mexico or in Europe, before our independence was proclaimed. From a revolutionary manifesto * signed in Paris on the 22d of December, 1797, by Don José del Poso y Sucre, Don Manuel José de Salas and Don Francisco de Miranda, who called themselves “delegates from the Junta of Deputies from the Provinces and the people of South America, which convened at Madrid, Spain, on October 8, 1797, to settle upon the best means of effecting the independence of the American colonies of Spain,” it appears that prominent men from South America had been endeavoring since 1782 to establish independence. To aid in attaining that object, the alliance of England, at that time at war with France, was recommended. They entered into several negotiations with England to that end, especially one initiated in London in 1790, with the British Premier, as a consequence of the conference held at Holliwood, which, it was stated, had been approved by the South American provinces, for the purpose of obtaining from Great Britain a naval

* This paper was published in 1815, by ex-President John Adams, in the *Boston Advertiser*, with a letter addressed to the editor, Mr. Lloyd, in defence of his course in that incident and reproduced in Spanish by Señor Don Ricardo Becerra, in the first volume of his book, *Vida de Don Francisco de Miranda*, published in Caracas, Venezuela, in 1896.

force not exceeding 20 warships, 8,000 infantry, and 2,000 cavalry, the provinces promising to pay to England a pecuniary indemnity which the *Edinburgh Review* stated was to be 30,000,000 pounds sterling, after their independence was accomplished, and to grant her besides certain commercial advantages.

In that manifesto it was suggested that the United States of America should be invited to make a treaty of friendship and alliance with South America, "on the bases that the possession of the two Floridas and of Louisiana should be guaranteed to the United States, so as make the Mississippi the boundary between the two great nations, and that to the United States and Great Britain should be given all the islands of the American Archipelago, except Cuba, the Key of the Gulf of Mexico." In return for these advantages it was proposed that the United States should furnish to South America an army of 5,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry.

That document entrusted the leadership of the scheme, and the military operations necessary to carry it out, as well as the negotiations with England and the United States, to General Don Francisco de Miranda, a native of Caracas, educated in Europe, who had served in the Spanish army up to 1785, and in the French Republic under the orders of General Dumouriez in 1793. He had been tried for treason and acquitted. He visited Russia during the reign of the Empress Catherine, and was the real head and centre of the conspiracy prepared in Europe to emancipate the American colonies of Spain. General Miranda believed that he had secured the assistance of the British government, and it appears that he had some promises of assistance from Pitt, then the British Premier, which, however, were never carried out.

It seemed natural to suppose that, while Great Britain was waging war against Spain in 1798, the British government would have been not only willing, but even anxious, to divert her attention by assisting the insurrection of her colonies. That was not exactly the case, however, because England expected that Spain would sever her alliance with France and so aid England in her war against the French revolutionary government. With that object, England sent an agent to Madrid to give assurances to the Spanish government that she would not assist in the colonial insurrection if Spain gave up her alliance with France. At the same

time instructions were sent to the English authorities in the Island of Trinidad to assist in the South American insurrection and to prepare an expedition for that purpose, as Mr. Rufus King, the United States Minister in London, communicated to Mr. Pickering, the Secretary of State, in a dispatch dated on February 26, 1798. Had England assisted directly in securing the independence of the Spanish colonies, that would have defeated her purpose of obtaining the support of Spain in her war against the French government. This was especially the case after Napoleon obtained the ascendancy in France, and more so after the events of 1808, culminating in the treaty of Bayonne. When the Spanish nation rose against the French troops which occupied its territory, England naturally was not disposed to embarrass Spain, whom she considered and at length found to be a very valuable ally against Napoleon, and therefore all the efforts of Miranda and of the leaders of the insurrection in America to obtain material assistance from England were unavailing.

Although the document above referred to seems to be restricted to South America, Central America is also mentioned in connection with a promise "to open to trade the Isthmuses of Nicaragua and Panama"; and incidentally Mexico is also mentioned in a statement that "the deputies of the viceroyalties of Mexico, Santa Fé, Lima, and Rio de la Plata, and of the Provinces of Caracas, Quito, Chile, etc., assembled in a legislative body, should decide definitively about the commercial advantages to be granted to England and the allies of South America." It is probable, however, that this reference to Mexico was made on the supposition that Mexico, by reason of similarity of race, language, and institutions, would follow the lead of South America. I have no knowledge of any Mexican having taken part in the conference.

It was further stated in that document that "Don José del Poso y Sucre and Don Manuel José de Salas should set out at once for Madrid to report to the Junta the result of their mission to Paris, carrying with them a copy of the same, and that as soon as this was done the Junta should adjourn and its members should go immediately to the American continent to promote simultaneously insurrections in all the towns of South America, to take place as soon as the assistance furnished by the allies should appear." A copy of that paper was given to General

Miranda, as his credentials, to represent the Junta before the British and American governments.

Mr. King in his dispatch to Mr. Pickering already referred to, reported that he had met in London several Jesuits of South America, from whom he learned that they were working for the emancipation of the Spanish colonies in America. They had lived for many years in London in the service and under the pay of the British government, and they had shown Mr. King the papers that they had prepared for presentation to the British government. From a letter addressed by ex-President Adams on March 6, 1815, to Mr. Lloyd, editor of the *Morning Advertiser* of Boston, explaining his conduct while President of the United States in connection with the efforts of Miranda to obtain the assistance of the United States to emancipate the American colonies of Spain, it appears that Don José del Poso y Sucre and Don Manuel José de Salas, who signed the document in conjunction with General Miranda, were Jesuits, probably of the number mentioned by Mr. King; and to the fact, Mr. Adams intimated, that the immediate predecessor of Charles IV., who was at the time (1798) King of Spain, had expelled the Jesuits from his American dominions, was due their action in the matter, they being influenced by a desire to take revenge on the Spanish monarch. There is no doubt that Pitt had detained in London some Spanish Jesuits who took a very active part in the conspiracy to promote the insurrection and who wrote several manifestoes and inflammatory documents which were to be distributed in the American colonies.

Expedition of General Miranda to Venezuela in 1806.—General Miranda sent to the United States in November, 1798, his friend and co-worker, Señor Caro, for the purpose of obtaining the assistance of this government. It appears that the scheme had the good will of Alexander Hamilton, who was at the time organizing a military force to be used in case of war with France, and that it also had the sympathy of Aaron Burr. President Adams, however, following a conservative policy, and having due regard to the neutrality laws, did not embark in the adventure, and did not receive Señor Caro. In November, 1805, General Miranda came to the United States and was received both by President Jefferson and by Mr. Madison, the Secretary of State. He organized in New York an expedition of about two

hundred men, which left that port on February 3, 1806, on the ship "Leander" for Jaquemel in the Island of Hayti, where he was joined by two transports, the "Bacchus" and the "Abeja." Mr. William S. Smith, Jr., a grandson of ex-President John Adams, and a son of Colonel William S. Smith, surveyor of the Port of New York, went in that expedition as aid to General Miranda. In consequence of that, Colonel Smith had to resign and he was indicted, and a noisy trial followed in which he was acquitted.

Miranda reached the coast of Venezuela, at Ocumare, but there he lost his two transports, which were captured by the Spaniards together with sixty-seven men, ten of whom were hanged at Puerto Cabello, the remaining fifty-seven being sent to the military prison of San Felipe el Real, in Cartagena.

Miranda met in the Island of Barbadoes, Sir Alexander Cochran, Admiral of the British Navy, who addressed him a letter dated June 6, 1806, on board his flagship, the "Northumberland," in which he stated that Miranda's plan to achieve the independence of South America was advantageous to British interests, and agreed to assist in landing Miranda's forces on the coast of Venezuela, and to provide him with three small vessels and probably one frigate, and to defend Miranda's ships against any attacks from the Spanish naval forces. In exchange for his assistance he demanded certain commercial advantages to be granted when independence should be achieved. Miranda left Grenada escorted by the English man-of-war "Lily," the brig "Empress" and the merchant schooner "Trimmer." In Trinidad he had been reinforced, his army consisting of about four hundred men and he landed at Coro. But nobody joined him, all the natives having fled to the interior on his arrival, and he was forced to leave the mainland and to return to the Antilles.

In 1811, Miranda went again to Venezuela and succeeded in organizing a force with which he began the war, but he was obliged to surrender, and was sent to a Spanish prison in Cadiz, where he died in 1816, without seeing his country's independence accomplished. But he had been the forerunner of Bolivar.

Beginning of Mexican Independence.—The causes which, in my opinion, did more than anything else to precipitate the independence of the American colonies were the disgraceful dissensions of the Spanish royal family in 1808 at Aranjuez and their subservience to Napoleon, which culminated in their

abdication in favor of the Emperor. This was accomplished by the Treaty of Bayonne, which transferred to the French Emperor all the rights and titles of Charles IV. to the throne of Spain and the Indies, including the American colonies. The Spanish people strenuously resisted the French invasion and established Juntas in Spain and the colonies to rule the country in the name of Ferdinand VII., the heir of the King, whom Bonaparte had compelled to abdicate. It was in this manner that the native Americans acquired for the first time some control of their own affairs and began to realize that they could take care of themselves. Although the principal Spanish Junta, which met at Cadiz, called representatives to the Cortes from the Spanish colonies, the representation of the latter was very meagre, and that step, instead of satisfying the colonists, only demonstrated to them that the Spaniards were determined not to allow them self government. Thus the idea of independence gradually gained ground all over the American continent.

That such was the case is shown by the remarkable coincidence that the insurrections in all the American colonies of Spain took place within the same year and almost at the same moment, and, I think, without any previous accord among them. The distances were so great and the means of communication so scanty, slow, and difficult, that news of the outbreak of an insurrection in one colony could not have been received in the others for several months, in some cases not for a year or more, after it had occurred.

This fact shows, in my opinion, that the colonies were ripe for independence, and that a condition of things had been reached which made independence a necessity that could not be postponed or smothered. Although there had been several attempts at independence in the American colonies of Spain before the year 1810, especially the one at Chuquisaca, now Sucre, in Bolivia, on May 25, 1809, independence was not proclaimed until the following year, on May 25 in Buenos Ayres, July 20 in Bogotá, and in September in Mexico and all the other colonies.

It is possible that the Mexican patriots had heard of the several attempts made in the other Spanish colonies to proclaim independence, but I have no doubt that no real importance was attached to such news, and that it had no influence upon their conduct. In Mexico the Viceroy Iturrigaray began to organize

in 1808, after the Treaty of Bayonne, an army for the purpose of defending the colony against the French. The Spanish residents became jealous of the Viceroy, deposed him and sent him back to Spain, appointing another Viceroy in his place. That, naturally, destroyed the respect which the Mexican people had for the representative of the Spanish King, and showed them that force, when successful, was justifiable and could accomplish great things. The way was thus prepared for a series of military revolutions which continued to break out for about sixty years.

The South American leaders, if we are to judge by the opinions expressed in the document above referred to, and more especially General Miranda, who had undoubtedly military talent and was a distinguished soldier and an enthusiast in the cause of independence, were of opinion that independence could not be achieved with native resources only, and that it required as an indispensable element the armed assistance of foreign nations, although they never succeeded in obtaining any. The views of the Mexican leaders were altogether different. They never dreamed of any foreign assistance, and they relied entirely upon the strength and resources of their own country. It is true that Hidalgo, soon after he proclaimed independence, and while he was retreating toward the north, sent a representative to the United States, but I do not think he had any idea of asking for material assistance, and desired only to obtain the good will of a neighboring country in the contingency that, in the course of his military operations, he should reach its frontiers.

The United States did not Assist the Independence Cause.—The United States government did not render either material or moral assistance to the cause of the independence of the Spanish-American colonies. At various times they sent commissioners to examine into the condition of those countries, especially to Buenos Ayres, as I will presently state more in detail; but, being at peace with Spain, they considered that it would be a breach of neutrality to aid the movement for establishing independence in her colonies. They did not recognize the independence of the colonies until several years after it had been fully accomplished. Mexico, for instance, established her independence in 1821, but the United States did not recognize Mexico as an independent nation until 1824, though she was a neighboring country.

Mr. Lyman, in his book, *Diplomacy of the United States*, says that "these revolutionary struggles did not awaken any great general interest in our citizens." "Our government," he adds, "was left free and unembarrassed to pursue its steady course of good faith and exact neutrality toward Spain, and of justice and policy towards the colonies." He further says: "Neither the vicinity of some portions of their respective territories, nor the circumstance of being members of the same continent, nor the benefit to be derived from commercial relations, nor the similarity of their struggles for independence, appears in the least to have influenced the definite arrangements of this government. On the contrary, the business was conducted with the utmost caution and circumspection, and nothing was done to give offence to Spain, or awaken in other nations the slightest suspicion of the loyalty with which this country was determined to adhere to its system of neutrality."

Mr. Lyman concludes by saying that the United States was the first country to recognize the independence of the Spanish American colonies, but that the recognition was delayed until not a shadow of hope for the restoration of Spanish dominion remained.

Commissioners Sent by the United States to the Revolted Colonies.—Between 1810 and 1820 the President of the United States sent commissioners on three different occasions to South America, in order to obtain reliable and exact information regarding the real situation of affairs there. The first mission was entrusted by Mr. Monroe, as Secretary of State, to Mr. Joel R. Poinsett, as agent to Buenos Ayres, and was dated June 26, 1810. Mr. Alexander Scott was sent as agent to Venezuela on May 12, 1812. Mr. Poinsett's report on the condition of South America was dated November 4, 1818.

The second commission was sent by the President in 1817, and consisted of Mr. Theodorick Bland, Mr. Cæsar A. Rodney, and Mr. John Graham, who were instructed to examine into the conditions of Buenos Ayres and Chile. The reports of Mr. Rodney and Mr. Graham, dated November 5, 1818, and Mr. Bland's report, dated November 2, 1818, were transmitted to Congress on November 17 of the same year. Appended to the first two reports is a "Historical sketch of the revolution of the United Provinces of South America, from the 25th of May, 1810, until the open-

ing of the National Congress on the 25th of March, 1816, written by Doctor Gregorio Funes, and appended to his History of Buenos Ayres, Paraguay, and Tucuman."

The third commission was entrusted to Mr. T. B. Prevost and Mr. John M. Forbes, sent in 1820 as commercial agents to Chile and Buenos Ayres. Their reports were transmitted to Congress, the one on March 8 and the other on April 26, 1822. It is remarkable that no commission was sent to Mexico.

Commissioners Sent by the Revolted Colonies to the United States.—The leaders of the independence cause in Spanish America sent Commissioners to the United States for the purpose of obtaining the recognition by this government of their independence, and, if possible, material assistance. I have already referred to the Commissioner sent from Mexico by Hidalgo, and the other Commissioners of whom I find a record, were the following.

Don Juan Vicente Bolivar and Don Telésforo Orca were furnished with credentials dated at Caracas, April 25, 1810, and full powers to transact business. A copy of the Declaration of Independence of the Province of Venezuela, made by the Congress composed of deputies assembled in Caracas, was communicated by them to the United States government, and transmitted to Congress on December 9, 1811. These agents were not allowed to have any official intercourse with the United States government.

On December 11, 1818, Señor Don Lino Clemente informed the Secretary of State that he had been appointed Venezuela's representative "near the United States," and requested an interview; but he was informed that no conference could be held with him and no communication received from him by this government. His letters were submitted to the House of Representatives with the President's Message of January 29, 1819, accompanied by a report from Mr. John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, giving the reasons in full for delaying recognition at that time.

Don Manuel H. de Aguirre came to this country in 1817 as a public agent from La Plata and a private one from Chile, and addressed several letters to the Secretary of State, in 1817 and 1818, soliciting the acknowledgment of the Province of Buenos Ayres, which were transmitted to the House of Representatives, March 25, 1818, with a report from Secretary Adams, of that

date. No answers were given to his letters, although conferences were held with him, and the President declined to enter into any negotiations with Señor Aguirre, because the latter did not appear furnished with powers to negotiate and because he thought that the independence of the Provinces had not yet been established.

A short time after the declination of Aguirre's application, in May, 1818, David C. de Forrest renewed the consideration of the same claim, by soliciting this government to admit him as a consul general. The President did not grant the permission, because he thought it was not clear that the province even claimed entire independence, Buenos Ayres having the intention at that time to offer special commercial favors to Spain as a consideration for the relinquishment of her claims to sovereignty.

But neither the commissioners sent by the United States to the American colonies of Spain nor those sent by those colonies to the United States influenced in any way the attitude of strict neutrality observed by the United States government in the war for independence of the Spanish colonies in America.

The United States Adhered to the Strictest Neutrality in the War of Independence.—The question of recognizing the independence of the American colonies of Spain was first brought up in the United States on March 24, 1818, by Henry Clay, who felt great sympathy for the struggling Spanish colonies, and sought to obtain their recognition through legislative action. He proposed an appropriation of \$18,000 for the outfit and one year's salary of a minister to be deputed from the United States to the independent provinces of the River Plata in South America. This motion led to a discussion as to whether the power of recognizing foreign governments resided in the Executive or in Congress. The majority of the House seemed to be in favor of the Executive, and the motion was defeated on May 28, 1818, by a vote of 115 to 45.

On January 2, 1819, President Monroe's Cabinet considered the question of the recognition of Buenos Ayres. The Cabinet was divided on the question, Mr. Calhoun being of opinion that this country should act in concurrence with Great Britain, Mr. Crawford that it should send a minister to Buenos Ayres, and Mr. Adams thinking that the minister should come from Buenos Ayres seeking recognition.

Mr. Clay renewed his resolution, which was discussed by the House on May 10, 1820, asserting "that it was expedient to provide by law a suitable outfit for such minister or ministers as the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, may send to any of the governments of South America which have established and are maintaining their independence of Spain," and this resolution was carried by a vote of 80 to 75. On February 9, 1821, Mr. Clay again moved his \$10,000 appropriation bill for a minister to any South American government "which has established and is maintaining its independence of Spain." This was lost by a vote of 86 to 79. On the following day he introduced a resolution expressing "the interest of the people of the United States, which was shared by the House of Representatives, in the success of the Spanish provinces of South America struggling to establish their liberty and independence, and offering its constitutional support to the President of the United States, whenever he may deem it expedient to recognize the sovereignty and independence of any of said provinces." The first clause of this resolution was carried by a vote of 134 to 12 and the second by a vote of 87 to 68. A committee of two members was appointed to lay these resolutions before the President, and Mr. Clay, one of those members, in his report of February 19, said "that the President assured the committee that he felt a great interest in the success of the provinces of South America and that he would take the resolution into deliberate consideration with the most perfect respect for the distinguished body from which it had emanated."

On January 31, 1822, Mr. Trimble, of Kentucky, introduced a joint resolution stating that the "President was authorized and requested to acknowledge the independence of the Republics of Colombia, and that the Spanish provinces of South America that had established and were maintaining their independence of Spain ought to be acknowledged." Before this resolution was acted upon, Mr. Nelson, of Virginia, introduced another resolution asking the President to lay before the House the documents relating to the South American question, and in response to this resolution President Monroe sent to the House his message of March 8, 1822, in which he stated that, in his opinion, the time had come to recognize the South American provinces as independent countries. Thereupon Mr. Russell, of Massachusetts, in behalf of

the Committee on Foreign Affairs, introduced two resolutions. In the first the House "expressed its concurrence in the opinion contained in the message of the President, of March 8, 1822, that the late American provinces of Spain, which had declared their independence and were in the enjoyment of it, ought to be recognized by the United States as independent nations"; and the second "instructing the Committee on Ways and Means to prepare a bill appropriating a sum not to exceed \$100,000 to enable the President to give due effect to such provision." Both resolutions were approved by the House.

The Monroe Doctrine.—President Monroe's famous message of December 2, 1823, in which he announced the American continental policy bearing his name, was of course issued almost two years after he had recognized, in his message of March 8, 1822, the independence of the American colonies of Spain. But that recognition was then only theoretical, as the United States neither sent to nor received from those countries any representative until some years later.

In that year, 1823, two specific dangers threatened the Western Hemisphere. The northwest boundary between the United States and Canada had not then been determined and the territory in dispute had not been occupied or even fully explored. Russia, by formal proclamation in 1821, had set up a claim to territory along the Pacific coast as far south as the fifty-first parallel, and had given unmistakable signs of her intention to plant a Russian colony within the disputed territory. The movement was alarming to Great Britain as well as to the United States.

The other cause of alarm was that the Metternich-Bourbon reaction had set in, and there was good reason to fear that the attempt was about to be made to resubjugate the Spanish-American colonies. This fear found ample justification in the attitude of the "Holy Alliance," formed immediately after the downfall of Napoleon, by Russia, Austria, Prussia, and France, for the avowed object of protecting the Catholic religion and the Divine Right of Kings. This alliance was offered for signature to all the monarchs of Europe except the Pope and the Sultan. Of all the powers Great Britain alone declined to join in the Alliance, but under the leadership of Metternich this combination proceeded with its reactionary work. In 1821 it sent an Austrian

army into Italy to prevent the adoption of a constitution at Naples, and two years later it threw a French army into Spain to suppress a popular movement in behalf of the free constitution of 1812 and to reinstate the Bourbon dynasty. Having thus put under its heel all opposition in Europe, the Alliance proposed a congress to consider the subjugation of the revolted Spanish colonies in America, and the re-establishment of Spanish authority in the Western Hemisphere. Before matters were far advanced, the design became known to Great Britain, and word concerning it was at once sent by the British Minister to the government of the United States. President Monroe immediately consulted Jefferson and Madison, as well as his cabinet, of whom John Quincy Adams and Calhoun were the most prominent members. All agreed that the matter was of such momentous interest as to justify a formal remonstrance. John Quincy Adams, the Secretary of State, wrote a declaration of policy relating to colonization, and Jefferson a similar declaration in regard to interference. These two were tacked together by President Monroe and embodied in his message, which can be summarized in the following four propositions :

1. That the United States would not tolerate further colonization in the American continent by European powers.

2. That they would not permit the subjugation or subversion of any American government by the governments of Europe.

3. That they would not allow the extension to America of the monarchical system of the "Holy Alliance."

4. That the United States had not interfered and would not interfere with any of the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power on this continent.

The Spanish-American Republics and Cuba.—There is one case in which the United States prevented the independence of two Spanish colonies in America.

When Bolivar had driven the Spanish from Colombia, he thought his task was not ended and that his republic was not safe as long as the enemy was in possession of the adjoining country. He, therefore, took an armed expedition to Peru with which he accomplished the independence of that country, decided at the battle of Ayacucho. How well grounded that fear was is shown by the fact that in 1829 the Spanish government sent to Mexico an armed expedition from Havana under General Barradas, which

landed at the port of Tampico, for the purpose of subduing again the colony of New Spain, as Mexico was then called. But the independence had gained such a foothold that it was easy for us to defeat that expedition.

After Bolivar had accomplished in 1824 the independence of the northern half of South America, he thought that his task was not finished before the Spanish were driven from Cuba and Puerto Rico, as the possession by them of those controlling islands—especially the former—would give Spain an important foothold on this continent, from which she could attack at any time her revolted colonies. This danger was of a great deal more consequence to Mexico on account of the proximity of Cuba to that country, and both the governments of Mexico and Colombia contemplated a plan of military operations, for the purpose of accomplishing the independence of the island of Cuba. This step was in accordance with the conduct followed by Colombia and Mexico before the accomplishment of their independence.

When the government of the United States heard of the scheme of the Mexican and Colombian governments for the liberation of Cuba, Mr. Clay, Secretary of State of the United States, addressed a letter to the Mexican and Colombian Ministers at Washington, on December 20, 1825, requesting that their respective governments should suspend any expedition that they might be preparing against the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico, on the ground that the United States could under no circumstances permit them to fall under the sovereignty of England and that they could not be indifferent to the islands passing to the possession of France, and that, therefore, the only solution of the question was to leave the islands in possession of Spain. A copy of this communication was sent by Mr. Clay to Mr. Everett, United States Minister at Madrid, with a despatch dated at Washington, April 13, 1826, from which I have borrowed this information. In that despatch Mr. Clay stated that the United States government thought that England was at the bottom of the scheme to liberate Cuba and that, if Cuba were once independent from Spain, she would finally become an English colony or a state under French protection.

It seems to me clear that the real reasons for Mr. Clay's official communication against the independence of Cuba, in 1825 and 1826, were not so much those stated in his despatches as the

fear that, if Cuba were once independent or annexed to Mexico or Colombia, slavery would be abolished in that island, a step which would have been in conflict with the policy of the United States, then governed by the slave power, which naturally supported slavery. The question of slavery was then at the bottom of every important move of the United States, foreign and domestic, and it colored or discolored all her important transactions. Perhaps the idea of acquiring sometime the island of Cuba was another reason which dictated Mr. Clay's action.

The question of the independence of Cuba was considered in the American Congress which met at Panama in 1826, and the idea of sending an armed expedition to liberate that island was abandoned on account of the opposition of the government of the United States, as appeared from a communication from Mr. Poinsett, United States Minister to Mexico, to Mr. Clay, Secretary of State, of September 23, 1826.*

The Panama Congress.—When Simon Bolivar proposed the assembling at Panama of a congress of the American nations to agree upon some continental policy, President John Quincy Adams laid before Congress, in his annual message of 1826, the question of the representation of the United States at that Congress. The coalition against the Adams administration, which ultimately became the Jacksonian party, made its first great fight on this measure. It called forth long debates and aroused great excitement in the House of Representatives, because it was not an ordinary mission, and seemed to have far greater importance than any question of foreign relations that had previously come under discussion. It was believed to be an attempt to make a confederation or league of all the American countries, and thus to a certain extent extinguish the individuality of the United States.

This discussion lasted from February 3 to April 21, 1826, when the Committee on Foreign Affairs reported a resolution declaring that it was expedient to appropriate the necessary funds to send representatives to the Panama Congress. This resolution was approved by a vote of 143 to 54, and passed the Senate by a vote of 24 to 19.

The United States delegates to the Panama Congress were instructed to attend the Congress in a merely diplomatic character, without discussing or accepting any proposition of alliance bind-

* American State Papers, Series of Foreign Relations, Page 361, Volume VI.

ing the United States. These restrictions had been embodied in an amendment presented both in the House and Senate, which had passed the House, but was finally rejected, because it was considered an infringement upon the prerogatives of the Executive. As it expressed the views of Congress, however, its provisions were embodied in the instructions to the Commissioners.

I understand that one of the objects of that Congress was to accomplish the independence of the Island of Cuba, but the idea did not meet with the approval of the United States, and that fact prevented the Panama Congress from arriving at any practical result.

Conclusion.—It is clear that the United States did not in any practical manner assist the American colonies of Spain to achieve their independence.

I hope that this statement of facts will serve to show that the Spanish colonies in America achieved their independence by their own efforts and without the aid of any foreign nation, and that if some of them expected such aid they never got it. I trust, also, that it will dispel some errors prevailing on that subject.

M. ROMERO.